

Ron Stewien was a foundation member of the South Australian Division's Engineering Heritage Subcommittee, representing the State Transport Authority. Although his professional career took him interstate and overseas, he continued as an active member of the Branch committee in the intervening years.

Ron was a key contributor to the field trips organised by the Branch and the accompanying comprehensive notes; he also delivered talks to professional and community groups.

Ron has been a railway man all his long working life, starting with the South Australian Railways in 1950. He is best known as an observer and recorder of railway engineering and operations. Ron's first publication was in 1961 when he wrote a booklet for the 75th Anniversary of the Peterborough Railway Workshops. From 1963 to 1972 he was Chairman of the Australian Railway Historical Society (SA Division) Book Committee which produced three marvellous volumes on the 500, 600 and 700 class SAR steam locomotives and a book on the end of the steam era at Peterborough. Ron also produced a personal account of his experiences in the gauge conversion in the South East of the State and the restoration of the "Duke of Edinburgh" locomotive as well as documenting the heritage significance of a unique 60 ton floating crane.

In 1963, Ron designed and project managed the track layout for the Mile End Railway Museum. For the next four or five years he was a regular volunteer worker there. When the Museum (which became the National Railway Museum in 2001) was relocated to Port Adelaide in 1988, Ron was a member of the Steering Committee. Ron has also assisted the Pichi Richi Railway Historical Society and the St Kilda Tramway Museum.

In 2001 Ron prepared the nomination of the Trans Australian Railway for a National Engineering Landmark and was involved in planning the ceremony.

In recent years Ron has produced three of an intended ten volume history of the South Australian Railways, a massive undertaking, as well as other historical publications. Ron's focus is not just on the physical artefacts but in also describing the human dimension. Ron's contribution provides the context and personal insights that bring engineering heritage to life.